

XXV.—*Observations on the Genus Assiminia.*

By WILLIAM CLARK, Esq.

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN, Norfolk Crescent, Bath, Sept. 11, 1855.

IN your September Number, 1855, p. 183, Dr. Gray has controverted my opinion, that the so-called genus *Assiminia*, embracing the single species *A. Grayana*, belongs to the *Truncatella* of Risso.

He says, "Mr. Clark's description proves the converse of his position;" and observes, "that *Truncatella* should have a subcylindrical shell with a slender tapering tip, which falls off when the shell approaches adult age; hence the name of the genus: *Assiminia* has a broad conic shell with an acute tip which does not fall off; if it is to be a species of the same genus, the name of the latter ought to be changed.

"The foot of *Truncatella* is small and peculiarly formed, and the eyes of all the species, according to Mr. Clark's observations, are large, with a white iris; now this is not the case with *Assiminia*, and yet Mr. Clark regards it as a *Truncatella*."

It appears by the first part of Dr. Gray's remarks, that he has adopted the old conchological generic base for *Truncatella* from a particular species: that definition has long been disused, and did not even conchologically satisfy the requirements of science when M. Philippi wrote;—as proof, that eminent naturalist, in the 2nd part, p. 133, of his 'Enumeratio Molluscorum Siciliae,' thus remarks on the animal of *Truncatella*:—

"Tale animal testas tantopere diversas habitat, at vix ac ne vix quidem characteres illis communes invenire possumus, subcylindricas nempe, apice demum decollatas, globoso-conoideas, imo discoideas. Illi quibus hanc ob causam nomen *Truncatella* non placet, nomine *Choristoma* a De Cristophoris et Jan proposito utantur, ne novo nomine scientiam jam nominibus gravatam onerent."

And Philippi illustrates these views by four figures, tab. 24. f. 2, 3, 4, 5; three of them differ from Dr. Gray's definition by their contours and by their apices never becoming decollated: the 4th greatly resembles the outline of the so-called *A. Grayana*; indeed, so much so, that it might pass for it, if the description and size did not somewhat differ; but notwithstanding this discrepancy, I almost think the figure (the outline, size, having perhaps being accidentally omitted) may be intended to represent our *Truncatella Grayana*.

These extracts show that Dr. Gray's conchological generic cha-

acter of *Truncatella* applies to only one species, and is therefore partial, untenable, and contrary to authorities.

We now come to a later epoch, when malacology has furnished an essential generic character for *Truncatella* which no other British mollusk has yet been found to possess, that is, the immersion of the eyes in the tissue (instead of being placed on pedicles as is usually stated) at the superior and nearly terminal points of the short, strong, divergent, almost rectangular tentacula: this structure stamps the so-called *A. Grayana* a *Truncatella*, and is that of every other British species of the genus.

Dr. Gray then terminates his reasoning with a malacological observation, that I have described the *Truncatella* of my work on the British Marine Testaceous Mollusca as having a white iris (? pupil), and that I had not observed in *A. Grayana* a similar appearance, on which account he seems to throw a doubt of its being a *Truncatella*. I do not understand the logic of this; the point in question is a mere specialty; one may with as much reason say that a man with a red iris or pupil, for example an *albino*, is not of the genus Man, because he has not the usual dark or grey iris; so, it is equally absurd to infer that *A. Grayana* is not a *Truncatella*, because the white iris or pupil was not detected.

Dr. Gray concludes by stating, that my notions are not those usually held by modern zoologists, and pronounces the whole of my logic unsound. I am not surprised that my logic should not find favour with one who considers that a genus must be restricted in the number of its species, however similar these may be in every essential character; and am sorry to learn, on Dr. Gray's authority, that such notions are held by modern zoologists, of which I was not before aware.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

WILLIAM CLARK.

XXVI.—*On the Morphology of the Organs called Lenticels.*

By M. E. GERMAIN DE SAINT-PIERRE*.

THE name of *lenticular glands* was given by Guettard, and that of *lenticels* by P. DeCandolle, to certain organs belonging to the bark of a great number of plants, which appear at the surface of the epidermis in the form of little brownish elevations or rugosities of an oval or elliptical form.

* From the Comptes Rendus, August 20, 1855, p. 305.